

This crucial legislation also created an unprecedented healthcare system that complements the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010 that Connie also played a major role in helping shepherd through the Education and the Workforce Committee, and that is now providing millions of Americans with affordable health care who previously had no coverage.

Mr. Speaker, it is with much more than coincidence that the high school graduation rate in my congressional district has accelerated—from 55 percent to 85 percent—during Connie's tenure as my chief of staff.

This sharp increase has lifted up a generation of young Latinos, who are making significant contributions to our communities and regional economy; and it is a direct result of Connie's advocacy and leadership contributing to the passage of each of these four aforementioned bills.

These public laws constitute my collection of framed legislation in my congressional office that I was very proud to pass as either chairman or ranking member of the Higher Education and Workforce Training Subcommittee with Connie at the helm of my office.

I am also indebted to Connie for her tireless efforts in helping me facilitate two new international land bridges designed to stimulate commercial activity, economic growth, and stability to the Rio Grande Valley.

Her intimate knowledge of transportation policy was a key element in the process culminating in the approval of Presidential permits that paved the way to open the Donna-Rio Bravo and the Anzalduas International Bridges.

Similarly, Connie was influential in securing \$300 million in Federal investments for floodway levee improvements along the Hidalgo County, Texas, and Mexican borders.

We still remember the impact of Hurricane Dolly in 2008 that brought between a foot and 15 inches of rain to the Valley. Hurricane Ike followed shortly thereafter, with storm surges as high as 20 feet and caused almost \$20 billion in damages.

My district would have been more highly susceptible to damage and our residents even more imperiled if the levees were breached by a hurricane or heavy rains without this assistance. As a result, hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of property were spared during the landfall of Hurricane Alex in 2010, when the Rio Grande River crested to a record of 59 feet.

In the wake of economic crisis, Connie led my team in preparing our communities to apply for assistance that ultimately received over half a billion dollars for Hidalgo County alone under the ARRA.

Mr. Speaker, I am saddened to lose Connie as a trusted and beloved member of my staff, but I am happy for her as she embarks upon a new endeavor as the senior vice president of public and community relations and special coun-

sel of the Doctors Hospital at Renaissance, where she will continue to serve my constituents and be uniquely positioned to help the hospital deliver and expand the reach of health care to underserved communities and economically disadvantaged families.

I wish to, again, thank Connie Humphrey for all of her hard work, steadfast commitment to the people of south Texas, and for her skillful management of my staff and congressional offices.

On behalf of the 15th Congressional District of Texas, I congratulate Connie for her excellent service and for a job very well done.

25TH ANNIVERSARY OF AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. COSTELLO) for 5 minutes.

Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, this past Sunday was a special and historic day. It marked 25 years since the Americans with Disabilities Act was signed into law.

The ADA has had a profound impact on our country and its citizens. It speaks to the best about our country; toward forming a more perfect union, it aims to provide equal opportunity for those who have a disability.

This anniversary, I feel, allows us to reflect on something that unites us; that is it is estimated that one in five Americans is living with a disability. Disabilities affect individuals in every congressional district in this country, in every State, in every neighborhood. It touches the lives of everyone—race, gender, income. No demographic is exempt from disability.

This law provides hope for those who have a disability and offers promise that opportunities exist for self-fulfillment.

On both a philosophical and practical level, it stands for the proposition that providing reasonable accommodations to those with a disability is how a civil society addresses an imbalance borne through no fault of the individual.

The law and its legislative, regulatory, and judicial progeny enables us to address issues such as public transportation, housing, education, and social services in a more thoughtful, proactive, effective, and humane way. While there is no doubt that substantial progress has been made, I am not here on the House floor to say that our work is done—because it isn't.

Thanks to the law, about 50 million Americans have been helped, and that doesn't include their families and loved ones who can point to how laws do matter and can make a positive impact.

Let's focus on the challenges that we still confront that relate to access and opportunity on holding up the standard of self-sufficiency for individuals with a disability and looking at how public policy can be shaped to help achieve this standard for disabled Americans.

The crux is often that time between ending in the classroom and looking for employment opportunity.

Just yesterday, I met with Abilities in Motion, a Berks County organization in my district that provides outstanding services to individuals and families in Berks County.

During our discussion, I heard from individuals and parents who, through grit and determination, were able—and are able—to navigate the complex maze of programs and services and funding streams to coordinate caregivers, transportation, and employment in the postacademic world.

Let's focus on streamlining and better integrating these programs and funding streams, and let's focus on encouraging job opportunities for disabled individuals who want to work and build a meaningful career.

□ 1030

Let's also focus on improving transportation options so that individuals who want to work are able to get to work without difficulty.

Let's continue to set forth and advance good policy, like the ABLE Act from the last Congress, which will encourage individuals and families to save tax-free dollars to help finance the costs associated with disabilities.

I am grateful for the tireless work of Abilities in Motion and other organizations that serve families and individuals in my district, such as the National Federation of the Blind, The Arc Alliance, the Disability Rights Network, and the Pennsylvania Statewide Independent Living Council. These organizations, their employees, and their volunteers work day in and day out to improve everyday lives.

Last, let's also thank the families who sacrifice for their loved ones who have disabilities, and let's recognize the courage and the hard work of those who have disabilities as they endure every day to become self-sufficient. It really speaks to what is great about this country.

Everyone out there who suffers from a disability and who wakes up every day with optimism and purpose, you are to be commended. You are the American success story.

Mr. Speaker, over the past 25 years, the ADA has increased accessibility and has empowered millions of Americans with disabilities. It is important to acknowledge the progress, but it is also important to recognize that there are still challenges that we should address from a public policy perspective. We must continue our efforts, in a bipartisan manner, to advance policy that keeps us a step ahead and that meets the needs of disabled Americans today and tomorrow.

RICKETY PATCHWORK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) for 5 minutes.